

Message Text

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CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, IS, EG, US

SUBJECT: PROPOSED LONDON FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING

REF: CAIRO 15790

1. FOR CAIRO: PLEASE INFORM SADAT AND KAMEL THAT DESPITE
SOME MISGIVINGS WE WILL GO ALONG WITH REVISED SCENARIO
WHICH KAMEL OUTLINED TO YOU AND WHICH WAS APPROVED BY SADAT.
WE WILL ACCORDINGLY CONVEY EGYPTIAN COUNTERPROPOSAL TO
ISRAELIS AFTER VICE PRESIDENT'S VISIT. SHORTLY THEREAFTER,
WHATEVER ISRAELI REACTION MAY BE, WE WILL CONVEY INVITATION
FROM PRESIDENT CARTER TO SADAT AND BEGIN FOR MEETING OF
FOREIGN MINISTERS SHORTLY AFTER EUROPEAN SUMMIT WHICH ENDS

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JULY 17. WE WILL HAVE TO CONFIRM LATER WHETHER JULY 18-19
DATES ARE CONVENIENT TO ALL CONCERNED BUT WILL AIM FOR
MEETING IN EARLY POST-SUMMIT TIMEFRAME. SECRETARY WOULD
STILL PREFER TO HAVE TALKS IN LONDON. MEANWHILE, WE WILL
CONTINUE TO RESPOND TO PRESS QUERIES ALONG LINES OF
PRESIDENT'S PRESS CONFERENCE REMARKS JUNE 26 WHICH GENERALLY
FORESHADOW THE KIND OF SEQUENCE KAMEL HAS IN MIND AND

WHICH YOU SHOULD CALL TO HIS AND SADAT'S ATTENTION. AS KAMEL REQUESTED, WE WILL NOT MAKE FORMAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF TALKS UNTIL WE HAVE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI RESPONSES TO PRESIDENT'S INVITATION - I.E., PROBABLY IN ABOUT TEN DAYS

TO TWO WEEKS' TIME.

2. YOU SHOULD CONTINUE THE EFFORTS YOU HAVE BEGUN (PARA 8 REFTEL) TO COUNTER KAMEL'S NEGATIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD WHAT CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED IN LONDON TALKS. NONE OF US IS UNDER ANY ILLUSION THAT THOSE TALKS IN THEMSELVES WILL BRING ANY MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE THINK THEY OFFER OPPORTUNITY -- AND WE URGE BOTH PARTIES TO VIEW THEM THIS WAY -- TO PROBE FOR CLARIFICATION AND RATIONALE OF EACH OTHER'S POSITIONS WHICH WILL FACILITATE SUBSEQUENT PHASES OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS. IN PARTICULAR, TALKS OFFER OPPORTUNITY FOR KAMEL TO PUT SEARCHING QUESTIONS TO ISRAELIS AND TO GET ACROSS THE THINKING BEHIND EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL. THE SECRETARY WOULD CONSIDER IT A MISSED OPPORTUNITY IF BOTH SIDES GO INTO TALKS IN FRAME OF MIND THAT NOTHING WHATSOEVER CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED, AT LEAST BY WAY OF LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR HIS OWN SUBSEQUENT EFFORTS.

3. FOR TEL AVIV: YOU SHOULD INFORM DAYAN THAT, AS HE KNOWS, WE AGREE WITH ISRAEL ON IMPORTANCE OF RESUMING
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DIRECT EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI TALKS AND HAVE BEEN WORKING ON EGYPTIANS WITH THIS OBJECTIVE IN MIND. SADAT HAS CONSISTENTLY TAKEN POSITION HE WOULD BE READY FOR RENEWAL OF DIRECT TALKS WHENEVER ISRAEL INTRODUCED "NEW ELEMENTS" INTO THE DISCUSSION. EGYPTIAN REACTION TO ISRAELI RESPONSE TO OUR TWO QUESTIONS MADE CLEAR THEY WERE DISAPPOINTED AND DID NOT SEE MUCH NEW. OUR SOUNDINGS WITH SADAT INDICATE THAT HE IS NOT READY AT THIS STAGE FOR FORMAL RESUMPTION OF DIRECT BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS IN POLITICAL COMMITTEE OR OTHER FORUM IN EITHER EGYPT OR ISRAEL. AS A STEP IN THIS DIRECTION, HOWEVER, WE FELT WE WERE CLOSE TO GETTING HIM TO AGREE TO A PROPOSAL BY PRESIDENT CARTER TO HAVE FOREIGN MINISTER KAMEL MEET WITH DAYAN IN LONDON JULY 11-12, IF SECRETARY VANCE WERE ALSO PRESENT FOR AT LEAST SOME OF THEIR SESSIONS, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSING ISRAELI POSITION ON WEST BANK/GAZA AND ANY NEW IDEAS ISRAELIS MIGHT WISH TO PUT FORWARD, AS WELL AS THE EGYPTIAN WEST BANK/GAZA COUNTERPROPOSAL WHICH EGYPTIANS HAVE BEEN WORKING ON.

4. IN VIEW OF RECENT PUBLICITY ABOUT A PROPOSED LONDON MEETING AND OF ISRAELI CABINET "REJECTION" ANNOUNCED

SUNDAY, EGYPTIANS HAVE NOW INFORMED US THEY ARE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS PROPOSED TIMETABLE. THEY HAVE ALSO INFORMED US THAT THEY WILL CONVEY THEIR WEST BANK/ GAZA PROPOSAL TO US FOR FORWARDING TO ISRAELIS IN ABOUT A WEEK. WE WILL THEN MAKE ANOTHER EFFORT TO OBTAIN EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT FOR FOREIGN MINISTER-LEVEL TALKS,

ASSUMING ISRAELIS ARE ALSO AGREEABLE, BUT IT NOW SEEMS CLEAR THESE COULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNTIL AFTER SECRETARY'S ATTENDANCE AT THE EUROPEAN SUMMIT.

5. MEANWHILE, FOR DAYAN'S AND BEGIN'S PRIVATE INFORMATION, OUR THINKING IS THAT LONDON TALKS WOULD TAKE PLACE IN INFORMAL FORMAT WITH MIX OF TRILATERAL AND BILATERAL
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MEETINGS. HOPEFULLY EXPLORATION WOULD PROVE FRUITFUL ENOUGH TO ENABLE FURTHER DIRECT CONTACTS TO BE SCHEDULED, PERHAPS AT DIFFERENT VENUE. IN ADDITION, SECRETARY WOULD BE PREPARED TO FOLLOW UP THROUGH PERSONAL VISIT TO MIDDLE EAST, IF THIS SEEMED NECESSARY TO KEEP NEGOTIATING PROCESS GOING.

6. WE MUST AGAIN EMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING PUBLIC COMMENTS ABOUT BOTH PROCEDURES AND SUBSTANCE OF NEGOTIATING EFFORTS IF FURTHER SETBACKS ARE TO BE AVOIDED. WE REMAIN DEDICATED TO GETTING EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI TALKS RESTARTED. WHATEVER THE NUANCES OF THE SUNDAY CABINET ANNOUNCEMENT, IT WAS PERCEIVED AS A REJECTION OF AN EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL WHICH HAS NOT EVEN BEEN TABLED, WHICH IS DIFFICULT TO RECONCILE WITH ISRAELI STATEMENTS THAT EVERYTHING CAN BE DISCUSSED IN NEGOTIATIONS -- NEGOTIATIONS THAT WE ARE DOING OUR BEST TO GET STARTED.
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